



School of Education

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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Thesis

THE DEVELOPMENT OF APPRECIATION IN READING

(with special reference to  
the ninth grade)

Submitted by

Ruth Dawson

(A.B., Radcliffe College, 1930)

In partial fulfillment of requirements for the  
degree of Master of Education

1933

First Reader: Everett L. Cetchell, Professor of English  
Second Reader: Earl A. Marlatt, Professor of Philosophy & Ethics, School of  
Religious Education  
Boston University  
School of Education  
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MINNESOTA

1933

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN MINNESOTA

(with special reference to  
the eighth grade)

Submitted by

Will Johnson

(A.B., Cassville College, 1933)

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

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*Handwritten notes at the bottom of the page, including the name "Will Johnson" and the date "1933".*



## Table of Contents

### Introduction

I. Introduction	1
II. Analysis of Literary Appreciation	4
III. Relation of Aims and Purposes of Teaching Literature to Appreciation	7
IV. Methods of Developing Appreciation	9
Through Intellectual Comprehension	13
Through Sensualizing	17
Through Emotions	19
Through Ideas and Values	21
Through Technical Study	24
Through Dramatizing	24
Through Writing	27
Through Measuring	28
V. The Use of Outside Reading in Developing Appreciation	31
Method of Guidance	32
Reports on Reading	34
Incentives to Reading	36
Choice of Books	38
Reading Supplementing Literature Course	40
Magazine and Newspaper Reading	40
The Supply of Books	42
VI. Conclusion	44
VII. Summary	45
Bibliography	47

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I.	Introduction	1
II.	Analysis of Literary Appreciation	4
III.	Relation of Aims and Purposes of Teaching Literature to Appreciation	7
IV.	Methods of Developing Appreciation	9
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	Through Generalizing	17
	Through Emotions	19
	Through Ideas and Values	21
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	Through Hearing	28
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VI.	Conclusion	44
VII.	Summary	45
	Bibliography	47



Introduction

William Lyon Phelps<sup>1</sup> finds his source of happiness in being able to appreciate all kinds of things and books, not over fastidiously but interpretatively. This capacity to appreciate has a large part in life activities and contributes to a full life. Since the appreciative response is a very individual one, fusing intellect and emotions, it can be made only to those aspects of life with which a personal relationship is felt. It is never completed but is increased by fulness of experience and development of perspective in living. The more anything cuts across our experience, or has some relation to our problems, the more it moves us. Genuine appreciation is impossible without emotional sensitiveness to facts and ideas wherever they appear. It shapes the things that come home to us, that we realize have possibilities. Moreover, all facts and ideas lead out into other things, and the sense of vistas beyond with the desire to follow is a concomitant of the appreciative response.<sup>2</sup>

Sometimes appreciation consists in a recognition of a writer's kindred moods and thought, and sometimes it results from unsuspected by-ways into which we are led.

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In either case its essence is increased in the value of the book for us.

What is appreciated, then, depends on experience, but also on training, since the reader's sense experience must be brought into kinship with that of the author. The points of contact between their experiences are expressed by the various types of appreciation - appreciation of sensory elements, of human nature and the emotions, of the beautiful, of intellectual qualities and humor, and of ethical values.

Lack of experience and training influences not only the understanding of facts but also the appreciation of moods and literary effects. Some do not get the aesthetic pleasure intended; others enjoy realization of technical skill rather than suggestiveness of mood. The combination of many ways of looking at a book - impressionistic, historical, social - increases the enjoyment of highly appreciative readers and aids in awakening their minds to further possibilities. Whereas the purely technical appeal may be somewhat limited, literature as experience of life will influence all. It is necessary to respect individual methods of enjoyment, since not everyone may be capable of appreciating the same book for the same qualities.

There can be no set standards which mark the achievement of appreciation. A book is good for each reader in

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the degree to which it furthers his development as a part of the social whole. So the same book may be high for one person and low for another. "Even our trashy, ephemeral modern writing.....may...have something to offer those whose thought and feeling are still more elementary."<sup>1</sup> A reader's capacity to appreciate depends upon his thinking something definite about the book's value or lack of value for him. In this sense to appreciate is to estimate properly for oneself from a source as wide and varied as the world itself, including social and civic activities, sense of ideals, and values. Both appreciation and enjoyment are accomplished when there is an appeal to interest, emotion, and a sense of deeper significance than at first appeared.

1 Buck, G., The Social Criticism of Literature, p. 44.

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## II

Analysis of Literary Appreciation

Literary appreciation is not vague but is made up of definite elements.<sup>1</sup> It is built up by attention to specific phrasing, clear characterization, rich expression. A reader's sensitiveness develops through the habit of thinking the writer's thoughts and emotions after him. The points of contact between author's and reader's experience comprise the sensory, emotional, intellectual, aesthetic, and ethical elements.

Wordsworth said that man's unaided senses were not enough for the realization of the world. Pictures are called up by words, which are symbols of things; but often we do not refer back to the image or use to the full power such details as are given. The reader should seek to build up in his mind the pictures which the writer has made, gather suggestions and connotations, hear the sounds, smell, taste, and touch with the sharpened senses of the artist. The artist not only has clearer visions but divines emotions, which must have some relation to life, and then reveals their import through suggestions rather than exposition. From the great variation in degrees and kinds

<sup>1</sup> LaBrant, L. L., The Teaching of Literature in the Secondary School.

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of emotions, we are elated by perceiving the relevancy of some emotion to a problem that has been occupying us.

Intellectual appreciation comes when the reader enters into full possession of the book's significance, when he gets from it what the creator put into it, reconstructing when necessary the writer's milieu - his social, political, and individual life.<sup>1</sup> There is pleasure in seeing how an author's brain works. Under this heading comes appreciation of the humorous, a sense of proportion, which, too, can be cultivated and has its foundation in experience.

The effect of a piece of literature as a piece of art calls up aesthetic feelings. The study of how an author gets his effects leads to examination of word colors, connotations, rhythms, figures - fascinating regions when entered from a genuine desire to explore the shapes and workings of a creative mind, but dull when studied as if the technicalities were of themselves important.

Another source of appreciation is in the significance, philosophical or ethical, of literature. The important ideas are sometimes expressed unmistakably in the theme, but more often pervade the whole book and must be gathered and interpreted from various hints.

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considered one by one, they are really an integrated whole, inseparable save for the purpose of consciously realizing their presence. The relative importance of each in the whole of appreciation will depend upon the literature read and even more upon the interests and training of the reader.

The particular purpose in reading - self-discovery, information, entertainment. When a reader finds expressed thoughts and feelings which seem to be his own, he is literally saved. Among the various purposes given for teaching literature are the enlarging and enriching of experience, profitable employment of leisure time, the cultivation of the moral sense, the forming of social attitudes, and the knowledge of literature.<sup>1</sup>

As far as appreciation is concerned, most knowledge of literature gained through criticism is worthless for those who have not read the books discussed. "Any teaching of reading which does not tend to broaden and strengthen the sheer enjoyment from reading has been of doubtful value."<sup>2</sup> When various aims conflict, when the teacher would proceed one way for the sake of business-like information and another for appreciation, he must evaluate the ends. If the goal is to lead to the richest

1. Egan, F. W., Reading: A Vice or a Virtue.

2. Meale, J. F., Psychical Studies in School Reading.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 17, quoted from G. H. Betts, Classroom Methods and Management, v. 134.

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## III

Relation of Aims and Purposes of Teaching Literature  
to Appreciation

"There is no particular merit in merely reading a lot of books"<sup>1</sup>; some only tend to vulgarize the taste, drug the mind, and paralyze thinking. The value comes from the particular purpose in reading - self-discovery, information, entertainment. When a reader finds expressed thoughts and feelings which seem to be his own, he is literally saved. Among the various purposes given for teaching literature are the enlarging and enriching of experience, profitable employment of leisure time, the cultivation of the moral sense, the forming of social attitudes, and the knowledge of literature.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Koch, T. W., Reading: A Vice or a Virtue.  
2 Horio, J. W., Emotional Stresses in School Reading.  
3 Ibid., p. 17, quoted from G. D. Carter, Classroom Methods and Management, p. 104.



possible life now and later, to stimulate the pupil to activities which have present values likely to persist in adult life, it will not matter so much if we do "take time that the student needs for the recognized classics of the world to present to him books which are of present day popularity."<sup>1</sup> If to supply him with an ability to read and a taste for reading is the most valuable thing a teacher can do, he will emphasize appreciation, that is, the personal realization of value by the student of what he reads and of the various contacts which it makes with his own experience.

Intellectual property.<sup>2</sup> The interests of ninth grade pupils are varied, but attempts have been made to discover the kinds of books most enjoyed.<sup>3</sup> Some conception of what a class already reads, enjoys, and understands is a necessary preliminary. The teacher may ask a new class to write a paper on "My Book Shelf" or ask for a list of books read during the summer. This information will prevent the choice of a book too far above them.

"The value of acquiring a book an individual would never read for himself seems of doubtful value compared to the habit of reading, even though the reading is of books of simple quality."

1 Leamon, H. S., Reading Books 'Just for Fun'.

Gray, W. E., and Madsen, H., Reading Interests and Habits of Pupils.

2 Ward, C. H., What is English.

1 Cook, L. B., Repeating Crow's Measurements, p. 220.

4 Largent, L. L., The Teaching of Literature in the Elementary School, p. 150.

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## IV

Methods of Developing Appreciation

If appreciation is such an individual response, the interests of the students must be considered. Recent studies tend to prove that high school literature courses have not been adequate in developing a taste for good reading which lasts after school years and spreads to un-directed reading.<sup>1</sup> Ward questions whether appreciation can be taught and advises guiding classes into a reasonable understanding of books, presented as typical parts of intellectual property.<sup>2</sup> The interests of ninth grade pupils are varied, but attempts have been made to discover the kinds of books most enjoyed.<sup>3</sup> Some conception of what a class already reads, enjoys, and understands is a necessary preliminary. The teacher may ask a new class to write a paper on "My Book Shelf" or ask for a list of books read during the summer. This information will prevent the choice of a book too far above them.

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- 1 Lehman, H. C., Reading Books 'Just for Fun'.  
Gray, W. S. and Munroe, R., Reading Interests and Habits of Adults.
- 2 Ward, C. H., What is English.
- 3 Jordan, A. M., Children's Interests in Reading.  
Washburne, C. and Vogel, M., What Children Like to Read.
- 4 LaBrant, L. L., The Teaching of Literature in the Secondary School, p. 160.



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1. Lehman, H. C., Reading Books 'Just for Fun'.  
Gray, W. S. and Leland, A., Reading Interests and Habits of Pupils.
2. Ward, G. H., What is Reading?
3. Jordan, A. M., Children's Interests in Reading.  
Washington, C. and Vogel, M., What Children Like to Read.
4. Leary, L. L., The Reading of Literature in the Second-ary School, p. 150.



Barnes<sup>1</sup> suggests basing the curriculum on literary experiences which are important, desirable, and close to intelligent practices of life. Modern literature would seem to have the advantage of touching life more closely at many points; but many modern novels are beyond the comprehension of ninth grade students in their emotions and philosophical values. However, when good modern literature is available, many of the difficulties hindering the student disappear, so that he may more gradually be led to re-create for himself the circumstances of old or alien backgrounds. There is a distinct advantage in beginning the study of ballads with modern ballads of Kipling and of the West, and then going back to the old English. Likewise an introduction to poetry reading is often best made through modern poetry on familiar subjects, such as a group of city poems or sea poems.<sup>2</sup> The strangeness of a different setting may put a bewildering distance between the reader and the book. The pupil must be shown how to build his own background from details of description and from the types of characters, their social position, and their activities. Sometimes the atmosphere can be established, as in the use of ballads, such as Masfield's "Spanish Waters" and "Ballade of John Silver"

1 Barnes, W., A Curriculum of Literary Experiences.

2 Cook, G., The Creative Study of Poetry in the Secondary School.

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1 Barney, W. A. Curriculum of Literary Experiences.  
2 Cook, G. The Creative Study of Poetry in the Secondary School.



for an introduction to Treasure Island.<sup>1</sup> The teacher will link the book, whenever possible, with experience and knowledge which the pupil already possesses, but which needs to be called freshly to mind. For instance, in the study of Stevenson's novel, he can draw forth what they know about great sea-goers, as Drake and Raleigh, and pirates from books or moving pictures. Everything which will bring a new setting closer to their experience by tying up associations is grist to his mill.

The book chosen for class reading will be a little more difficult than those read outside, since the teacher's task is to help over the parts requiring more interpretation than the pupil would be likely to make by himself. In other words, the part of the teacher is to teach the pupil how to read a little better, more appreciatively, than before. If the books are carefully chosen, the question of extensive and intensive reading melts away. Naturally the class books will not be a great deal more difficult than the ones already read. And only as much intensive study will be done as is necessary for intelligent reading. Thus in the study of one book, much will be read rapidly, keeping the sense of eager adventure, yet stopping occasionally for a deeper meaning, for

1 Pennington, P. O., Establishing a Mood. 1 Reading, p. 88.

for an introduction to Green's Island. The teacher will find the book, whenever possible, with experience and knowledge which the pupil already possesses, but which needs to be called freshly to mind. For instance, in the study of Stevenson's novel, he can draw forth what they know about Great sea-boats, as Drake and Galleon, and pictures from books or moving pictures. Everything which will bring a new setting closer to their experience by tying up associations is first to his mill.

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illuminating character, and for forcing the picture. Then the intensive reading will appear in its true purpose - a key to more appreciative reading by showing the student how to see and follow suggestive leads.

The criterion for special attention depends on what the teacher hopes to accomplish. A reader is not made suddenly. To point out every element which forms the sum total of appreciative response is to overwhelm the beginning reader. Not that effort is inimical to appreciation; it is in fact absolutely necessary to get the student to see that the results in enjoyment from closer reading are worth the time. Yet the satisfaction from swift progression and pleasurable reading cannot be foregone.

"Certainly when the pupil is asked to give his attention to twenty or more matters in connection with a given selection, he is not likely to be deeply impressed with any one. It seems, likely, also that any attempt to present children selections requiring so much minute examination of detail defeats its own purpose."<sup>1</sup>

If pupils read only freely and rapidly, however, they will not gain in ability to read better and will continue to miss much of the value of what they read. Irion's conclusion from his studies of comprehension difficulties of ninth grade students is that the average

<sup>1</sup> Hosic, J. F., Empirical Studies in School Reading, p. 85.

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reading comprehension is so mediocre that it is very hazardous to proceed on the assumption that the students can read well enough to appreciate literature by merely reading.<sup>1</sup>

"Genuine appreciation is secured by thorough mastery of important passages carefully selected for significant content and by more rapid study of the classics as a whole."<sup>2</sup>

#### Appreciation through Intellectual Comprehension

The first selection, then, should be made near to present abilities, tastes, and interests. Sometimes it is possible to give the students themselves a measure of choice, after telling or reading a little from several books. As there are many keys to appreciation, so the teacher should use many resources in order to get variation in method of treatment. One book or one method for too great length of time becomes tiresome. With different lessons, there can be different aims, by choosing a few passages to focus attention on some particular phase of appreciation. There is no need to

1 Irion, T. W. H., Comprehension Difficulties in Ninth Grade Students.

2 Craig, V. J., The Teaching of High School English, p. 75.

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read in class what the pupil can easily read for himself outside of class, nor to ask for facts which, if need be, can be tested quickly by short answer tests. Rather the class period should be used for discussion and stimulation to bring experience to bear on the selection and to aid in the difficulties of apprehension.

Difficulty in sharing the author's experience arises from many sources. When allusions are unknown, as Biblical and mythological ones so often are, the passages lose their effect. The average high school student has little conception of things in general - haycock, sickle, the pleiades, the North Pole.<sup>1</sup> Literature draws from fields in which the students have never entered; and it is for the teacher to put up sign posts so that the students will become consciously aware of what they miss. Yet if pupils looked up every unknown word and allusion in certain selections given to them, the essential impression would be crowded out because of the mass of unassimilated information. A pleasant emotional association is impossible when the student's reading is interrupted by looking up too

1 Farrar, P. C., Things in General.

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A pleasant emotional association is impossible when  
the student's reading is interrupted by looking up too



many notes. If such a selection must be studied, the teacher should help when the difficulty threatens to confuse the strong appreciative response. The teacher can insert synonyms for difficult Elizabethan words and can guide the student with interpolations over the troublesome first chapters. At other times, abridged editions will serve the purpose. Notes are intended as helps to the student's limited experience in fields which the author takes for granted, and are not supposed to be memorized.

Often the degree of appreciation that is possible without too minute study is worth more than the attempt at full appreciation by having a ninth grade class interpret all the words in The Merchant of Venice. When many references are made to mythological or historical facts which are unfamiliar to the student, the teacher should make the background clear first or treat it as a matter of interest in itself, as in the study of Johnson's London or Shakspeare's theatre. Frequently the difficulty of a new poem can be overcome by giving a few necessary bits of information and letting the pupils supply what they can. An excellent example is Moffett's teaching of The Glory Trail.<sup>1</sup>

1 Moffett, H. Y., Applied Tactics in Teaching Literature English Journal, February 1929.

many notes. If such a selection must be made, the teacher should help even the difficulty of selection to choose the strong representative responses. The teacher can insert synonyms for difficult abstract words and can guide the student with interpolations over the troublesome first chapters. At other times, assigned students will serve the purpose. Notes are intended as helps to the student's limited experience in fields which the author knows for granted, and are not supposed to be memorized.

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<sup>1</sup> Kipling, R. V., Applied Teaching in Reading Literature, English Journal, February, 1937.



in which he begins by talking of old time ranching and customs, getting contributions from the class about roping and brands and supplying meanings of a few new words himself.

In order to read intelligently, the pupil must know what to expect from a novel, a poem, or a play. He must be able to follow the plot clearly and get the implications and connections. It is the teacher's province to divine just when the intellectual difficulties will occur, for she cannot take too much for granted. In the study of a play, the students must discover how it differs from a novel, by talking about what is left out and of the limitations of the stage. In this the knowledge gained from moving pictures and plays will be useful. Dramatizing helps to further this understanding, since the student will be forced to dig out information from the details given in order to carry out acting and interpret the character. Sometimes knowledge of the author's circumstances, experience, and attitudes throws light on the meaning; and then the teacher can supply or direct the pupil to the social or individual background. For instance, a knowledge of Bryant's life at the time referred to in "To a Waterfowl" makes the interpretation more meaningful, just as a knowledge of ranch life and customs is a good introduction to

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cowboy ballads.<sup>1</sup>

### Appreciation through Sensualizing

Not only has the average pupil little experience with the actual things and facts which are embodied in writing, but he has not been trained to use his senses to full capacity. He reads words and does not see the realities for which the words are merely symbols. The teacher must make the students more aware of moods, as by asking many questions on a poem such as "The Highwayman" to show what details they got and what they missed. By getting them to force a mental picture from the words, the teacher can help to train them to read more appreciatively. Their attention should be called to sense words, that they may touch and smell and hear, too, with the sharpened senses of the artist. Moffett<sup>2</sup> has illustrated in his teaching of a cowboy ballad how to make the pupils visualize the action in expressive verbs such as "a-tripping" and the picture behind

1 I have not mentioned the actual ability to read and understand what is read, in which ninth grade pupils are frequently deficient. Diagnostic tests should be given to discover if the pupil is thus handicapped. Training and practice in reading for comprehension should be given and is of course a prerequisite for appreciative reading.

2 Moffett, H. Y., Applied Tactics in Teaching Literature, English Journal, February 1929.

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# Appreciation through Generalizing

Not only has the average pupil little experience with the actual things and facts which are embodied in writing, but he has not been trained to use his senses to full capacity. He reads words and does not see the realities for which the words are merely symbols. The teacher must make the students more aware of words as by asking many questions on a poem such as "The Highwayman" to show what details they got and what they missed. By getting them to force a mental picture from the words, the teacher can help to train them to read more appreciatively. Their attention should be called to sense words, that they may sound and smell and hear, too, with the sharpened senses of the artist. Holteff<sup>2</sup> has illustrated in his teaching of a cowboy called how to make the pupils visualize the action in expressive verbs such as "a-tripping" and the picture behind

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2 Holteff, E. Y., Applied Methods in Teaching Literature, Reading Journal, February 1935.



such words as "high-chin Bob" and "maverick-hungry rope." The student's attention should be drawn to the images in figures of speech, so that they have a clear picture of what is being compared. One way of emphasizing the value of such figures is to let the students contribute all their descriptions of and reactions to, for instance, a fog, and then read Sandburg's "Fog," in which a figure combines the many impressions.<sup>1</sup> The teacher needs to expand details in class often and to let the student practice it, illustrating how we fill in the gap according to our experience.

In this connection pictures are helpful to give a perceptual basis of new backgrounds and things, as "hauberk," "falcon," "wassail-bowl," and the terms connected with knights and tournaments in Ivanhoe. They should not be used to take the place of the student's own imaginative forcing of a picture, since that training will be of inestimable value throughout his life in reading. Yet after he has conjured a full image from details given or suggested, it is interesting and satisfying for him to see an artist's conception from the same details, and it encourages further effort in

1 LaBrant, L. L., The Teaching of Literature in the Secondary School.

each word as "high-coin gold" and "wonderful-pretty". The student's attention should be drawn to the images in figures of speech, so that they have a clear picture of what is being compared. One way of ex-

pressing the value of such figures is to let the students contribute all their descriptions of and reactions to, for instance, a rock, and then read Sandberg's "Rock," in which a figure combines the many impressions.<sup>1</sup> The teacher needs to expand details in class often and to let the student practice it, illustrating now we fill in the gap according to our experience.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibsen, E. L., The Teaching of Literature in the Secondary School.



his own habits of mental picturing. A variation of this is the student's search for a picture to illustrate a word scene.

Since appreciation is such a personal thing, the teacher may find that some pupils derive increased enjoyment in ballads by hearing "Chevy Chase," "Sir Patrick Spens," or DeKoven's Robin Hood ballads played on the victrola.<sup>1</sup> The ballads of the plains and of cowboys, such as "Old Chisholm Trail," "Grandma Grunts," suddenly become more real when they are heard sung by a group. When MacDowell's music "From the Depths" is played after reading Whitman's sea poems, which were their inspiration, the pupil secures a new and clearer realization of sound effects, so that, in reading poems of the sea he learns to listen for the noise and tempo and mood of the sea. No means to make the senses keener and more alert should be neglected, since it increases joy in living as well as in reading.

#### Appreciation through Emotions

In order that the student may share the emotional

1 Peirce, A. E., Music and Literature.

1 Solve, S. E., Poets, Poets, and Teachers.

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#### Appreciation through Emotions

In order that the student may share the emotional

<sup>1</sup> Felton, A. E., Musical Illustrations.



experiences of the author, the teacher will relate them to familiar experience. Since every student does not bring the same stock of experiences, the teacher can take advantage of the variations, supplementing them with her own illustrations. Since poetry is condensed and since often an emotional experience seems remote, the teacher can give a definite illustration of such lines as nature "red in tooth and claw" by an incident from her own observation.<sup>1</sup> It is well to take advantage of an emotion roused on some subject to read a poem allied to it, since one of the essentials in appreciation of poetry is getting the full force of an intense emotion. For instance in connection with the subject of factory workers, E. Browning's "The Cry of the Children" or some of Daly's poems might be read. Oral reading by the teacher is an unusually effective means of transmitting the effect; it plays upon the imagination, puts pictures in the mind, and stirs the emotions. Significant sentences in prose as well as in verse should be memorized and referred to frequently. It is important that the student become used to making the most of his experiences, as well as increasing them vicariously, by seeing their relation to literature. Often the pupil will become better acquainted with his own individuality by

1 Solve, N. D., Poets, Egoists, and Teachers.

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<sup>1</sup> Goetz, H. C., Poets, Poems, and Teachers.



watching characters in books, seeing what motives move them, and recognizing in himself those motives and feelings. After reading Treasure Island, for example, the pupils might follow a character, as Squire Trelawney, through from beginning to end, examining talk and acts to find out just what kind of man he is. They will need to watch not only what he says but how he speaks and its effect, what people who know the man think of him, considering his failings and admirable qualities in the final estimate. The students must be taught to pick out the emotion - revealing detail and to tell the cause of the feeling.<sup>1</sup> Just as we make up our judgments of people in real life from comparatively brief, telling glimpses, so we make up our opinions of characters by interpreting the significant details. The ability to do that grows with the consciousness of how much is left unsaid and with training in supplying the things between the lines.

#### Appreciation through Ideas and Values.

Although the book may have clear-cut significant

1 Blaisdell, T. C., Ways to Teach English.

1 Berg, L., Adapting Literature to Living.

2 Kappan, B. J., Teaching by Comparison.

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#### Appreciation through Ideas and Values.

Although the book may have clear-cut significant

I. H. Hall, T. C. C. Ways to Teach English.



purpose and attitudes, often they are revealed only by hints and suggestions, which the student must be trained to select and interpret in the light of all the experience and knowledge which he can muster.<sup>1</sup> The teacher should try to re-enforce the purposes of the writer and help him to obtain his effects and aims. There is a definite socializing value in class discussions, such as the comparison of the character of a knight with that of a gentleman today.<sup>2</sup> When reading war books and poems, the pupils should notice the attitudes expressed toward war and attempt to evaluate them. Interesting discussions arise from such comparisons as nineteenth and twentieth century standards of life, varying ideas of tragic force, novels and motion pictures, old and new explorers. Many students who are slow to appreciate aesthetic qualities will have opinions that are worth hearing on the ideas or ethical substance of a book. For some there will be an appeal in poetry as an historical experience, which will serve to make the student aware that poetry is a living reality. Five such contacts with various historical periods are in Tennyson's "Ulysses," "Lepanto," "August, 1914," "The Explorer,"

1 Berg, I., Adapting Literature to Living.

2 Keyes, R. K., Teaching by Comparison.

purpose and attitudes, often they are revealed only by hints and suggestions, which the student must be trained to select and interpret in the light of all the experience and knowledge which he can muster.<sup>1</sup> The teacher should try to re-enforce the purposes of the writer and help him to obtain his effects and aims. There is a definite socializing value in class discussion, such as the comparison of the character of a knight with that of a gentleman today.<sup>2</sup> When reading war books and poems, the pupils should notice the attitudes expressed toward war and attempt to evaluate them. Interesting discussions arise from such comparisons as nineteenth and twentieth century standards of life, varying ideas of tragic force, novels and motion pictures, old and new explorers. Many students who are slow to appreciate aesthetic qualities will have opinions that are worth hearing on the ideas or ethical substance of a book. For some there will be an appeal in poetry as an historical experience, which will serve to make the student aware that poetry is a living reality. Five such contacts with various historical periods are in Thompson's "Myases," "Lepanto," "August, 1914," "The Explorer,"

1. Boyd, L. L., Adapting Literature to Living.  
 2. Koger, E. L., Teaching by Comparison.



and selections from "John Brown's Body."<sup>1</sup>

If the student is taught to look for the ideas in the essay, he will find satisfaction and pleasure in that type of reading. Let him see the relationship between essays read in school and the essays continually being published in magazines on all kinds of subjects. Occasionally ideas that have deeper or wider significance may be expanded, and an interesting discussion provoked on such a passage as: "There's no art to find the mind's construction in the face."<sup>2</sup> The pupil should be made to realize that his opinions are interesting and taught to look within for the causes of opinions. Reading of a ballad such as "Greencastle Jenny"<sup>3</sup> will mean more if the teacher asks the pupils to try to decide whether the writer's sympathies are with the Union or Confederate cause.

Too many students look at literature as apart from life, either evading the moral implications or forcing the moral. Discussion of conduct should not be ignored when there is complexity in characters' emotions and activities. Like Keats our goal in reading should be to "get understanding."

1 Cook, C. B., Poetry as Historical Experience.

2 Simons, S. E., English Problems in the Solving.

3 Moffett, H. Y., Applied Tactics in Teaching Literature; Teaching 'Greencastle Jenny', English Journal, March 1928.

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1 Cook, C. B., Poetry as Historical Experience.  
2 Simon, S. B., English Prose in the Nineteenth Century.  
3 Motter, S. Y., Applied Reading in English Literature.  
Reading 'Greenbackism' and 'John Brown's Body'.  
Journal, March 1923.



### Appreciation through Technical Study

In spite of Beagle's experiment showing the advantage of technical analysis in teaching appreciation of poetry,<sup>1</sup> there is fairly general agreement that literary technique should not be stressed in the ninth grade. The student can readily see how rhythm is in the days and nights and sea, in walking and talking, and he can learn to recognize and respond to the simpler rhythms of poetry, which are illustrated in ballads and songs. If he looks at the comparisons he makes in ordinary talk, vivid comparisons in slang, and at a child's names for new things, he will look upon figures of speech in their poetic significance. He should be trained to visualize both members of a comparison. Moe has planned "primary image drills" to train this ability.<sup>2</sup> Some discrimination in words can be developed early, as well as admiration for the sincere and vivid expression of ideas; but mechanics should not interrupt thought and emotion. More detailed analysis should come later in the high school course, unless questions arise from the pupil's own interest in the subject.

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2 Moe, M. W., How to Use Primary Image Drills.

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2 Mos, M. W., How to Use Primary Image Drills.



## Appreciation through Dramatizing

"To be able to read a play, one must have gone quite frequently to the theatre, for it is necessary in reading the play to see it with the eyes of imagination in somewhat the same manner as one would see it at the theatre."<sup>1</sup>

Pupils are not always taught to see and feel a play as something different from a story, although it is only by realizing the action that a play can be properly appreciated and judged. This can be accomplished even better by acting than by seeing a play. In acting the pupil feels emotions more strongly and brings words to their fullest significance by portraying them in action. The informality of the class room gives the benefit of this activity to many pupils.

Miming ballads is fun and puts a premium on expression, makes close reading necessary, and develops imagination in the watchers.<sup>2</sup> Ability to pretend and imagine are required to fill in concretely from the author's suggestions. In miming a ballad, those who act must use their imagination and draw on experience to the utmost, while those who watch realize what interpretation they missed when reading or see with satisfaction the details remembered. By the comments, the class and teacher stimulate further achievement, and

1 Koch, T. W. T., Reading: A Vice or a Virtue, p. 41.

2 Hoerr, W. A. and Koontz, J. G., Treasure Island.

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1. Koss, T. W. T., *Reading: A View of a Village*, p. 41.  
2. Koss, T. W. T., and Koss, J. E., *Traverse Village*.



the pantomime grows in interest as long as many possibilities are kept before the mimers.

In acting out a scene from a play, discussion of the motives of characters will arise and will result in new attitudes toward, and justifications of, motives. Observation and thought are required before a student can portray the reactions of one character to another, and show what the character is thinking about. Sometimes a whole scene can be built from an incident which is merely suggested in a novel, or a novel like Treasure Island<sup>1</sup> can be dramatized. An emotional truth is vitalized by dramatics. What is acted becomes more meaningful than what is read; then incidents and phrases which had been hazy come to light.

As no scenery is used save as suggestions in the classroom, the pupils have the opportunity to fill in the imaginary scenery from the details given or suggested in the play. Only those selections should be dramatized which will be vitalized by being studied in this way. Effectiveness depends on action which can be worked out by appealing to the pupil's own experience and observations. It will take much searching,

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thinking, and forcing of the imagination; but the capacity to read plays appreciatively will be greatly increased.

### Development of Appreciation in Reading Through Writing

On the question of whether writing in connection with the reading of a piece of literature is conducive of appreciation, there is much disagreement. Many teachers believe that pleasure in reading is imperiled by the drudgery of writing.<sup>1</sup> The utilization must depend on class interest and ability and on individual ability to a large extent. Miss Mirrilies gives an example of ballad writing which is simple and gives pleasure by awakening artistic pride. By taking the material for writing the ballads from Ivanhoe, the pupil will make both the novel and the ballads more closely related to his own experience. Such writing gives an opportunity for examining the original closely for methods, although the material may be the student's own. The Christmas party in Silas Marner, the wine cask scene in Tale of Two Cities or Jerry's flight, when used as patterns, make the reader alive to the importance of words and the significance of details. The

1 Mirrilies, L. B., Teaching Composition in High School, ch. IV.

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writing of light essays after reading modern essays gives an opportunity for refining the sense of humor and develops the habit of watching out for "the rubs, the tricks, the varieties on which life turns."

Creative writing increases appreciation in general rather than in a particular selection. Students who write become more sensitive to words and the things around them and, from that, more sympathetic and responsive to other writers. Good judgment in literature will come much more naturally when based on actual experience with writing than when based on literary criticism, as Mr. Mearns has sufficiently demonstrated in Creative Youth. Nothing can so vividly impress students with the good and bad in writing as their own successes and failures. When a student has tried to find just the right word or struggles with expressive phrasing, he will notice those points more when he reads. Then his opinions about a writer will be based on convictions growing out of experience.

#### Measurement of Appreciation

Several tests of appreciation have been made for high school use, such as Abbott and Trabue's Test for Judging Poetry and Logasa-McCoy, McWright tests of Ap-

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preciation. Although these tests have not been proved to be completely valid and reliable, yet they are significant in that they emphasize the importance of appreciation and its development. The construction of such tests gives incentive to improving methods of teaching discrimination, and an index to those elements which are important. For instance, the six tests making up the Logasa tests are on: discovery of the theme, reader participation, reaction to sensory images, comparisons, trite and fresh comparisons, and rhythm. Moreover, such tests form an excellent teaching device, as they bring the qualities of poetry under close scrutiny. The spoiled versions of Abbott and Trabue's test illustrate by vivid contrasts the differences between good and bad poetry, and the choices of the students provide information about their tastes for the teacher's use.

The percentage of students who score high for each test or item gives a valuable index of the suitability of that material for a certain grade. There is evidence that the middle years demand vigorously expressed feeling, not restraint or under-statement. As the sentimental "spoiled" version was considered best in sixteen cases out of twenty-three, Abbott concludes that "the marked preference even in college for this silly gush over real poetry reveals a weakness in human nature, or in English

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 tests form an excellent teaching device, as they bring  
 the qualities of poetry under close scrutiny. The  
 applied versions of Abbott and Trabasso's test illustrate  
 by vivid contrasts the differences between good and bad  
 poetry, and the choices of the students provide infor-  
 mation about their tastes for the teacher's use.  
 The percentages of students who score high for each  
 test or item gives a valuable index of the suitability of  
 that material for a certain grade. There is evidence that  
 the middle years demand vigorously expressed feeling,  
 not restraint or under-statement. In the seventeenth  
 "applied" version was considered best in sixteen cases  
 out of twenty-three. Abbott concludes that "the marked  
 preference even in college for this silly gush over real  
 poetry reveals a weakness in human nature, or in English



teaching, or both, that demands serious attention."<sup>1</sup>

Angela Broening's experiment shows how a test can be used to demonstrate the efficacy of methods for developing appreciation. By retesting both the control and experimental group, she found very definite gains for the group, which had been guided in appreciation by special methods and materials according to the best principles.

The aim of the English course is to develop and improve habits of leisure reading, to supplement courses of study by wider reading in background literature, to broaden interests and give acquaintance with the best modern books, and to give opportunity to see the life of often situations realistically portrayed. The aims are high and designed to complement the work of the English courses; yet the plan provides no connecting link between class reading and personal reading, unless it is interpreted in relation to the present reading habits, interests, and abilities of the individual pupil. Habits of reading good books in the school years are not transferred to voluntary reading unless a definite effort is made in that direction.

The studies by Jordan<sup>1</sup> and Washburne<sup>2</sup> point the way toward the study of children's interests as an aid

<sup>1</sup> Jordan, G. W., *Children's Interests in Reading*.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Abbott and Trabue, *Test on Judging Poetry*, Teachers College Record, March 1921, p. 126





### Development of Appreciation through Outside Reading

Now that supplementary reading has been widely accepted as an important part of the English course, there is still the question of whether its possibilities and implications are being fully realized. The purposes of reading outside of class have been expressed in various ways: to develop and improve habits of leisure reading, to supplement courses of study by wider reading in background literature, to broaden interests and give acquaintance with the best modern books, and to give opportunity to see the life of alien situations realistically portrayed. The aims are high and designed to complete the work of the English course; yet the plan provides no connecting link between class reading and permanent reading, unless it is interpreted in relation to the present reading tastes, interests, and abilities of the individual pupil. Habits of reading good books in the school room are not transferred to voluntary reading unless a definite effort is made in that direction.

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1 Jordan, A. M., Children's Interests in Reading.

2 Washburne, C. and Vogel, M. What Books Fit what Children, Winnetka Graded Book List.





to guidance. Since interests play such an important part in determining the child's activities in school and even more outside of school, the teacher must know what the children read for pleasure, if anything, before she can help them wisely in selecting something neither above nor below comprehension and with consideration of their intellectual background and interests. The effective way to find out the amount and type of voluntary reading is to ask the pupils, at the beginning of the school year, to list on a filing card their two favorite books and any books and magazines read during the summer. If the students are made to realize that this list has nothing to do with marks, that it is simply a way of finding out what books they enjoy reading, the result will be fairly dependable. The teacher will have an added help in guidance if she asks for an autobiography which tells the pupil's interests, plans, and hobbies.

#### Methods of Guidance

By far the most satisfactory way to start outside reading is by a personal interview, in which the teacher will discover more clearly the pupil's attitude toward books. The question of why some people read and others do not has never been completely solved. There are naturally

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individual differences in the ability to read, in the opportunity to get books, and in the influence of environment and of interests. The teacher's aid will be necessary in encouraging and in choosing short, simple books for the pupil who is slow intellectually. Even if such a pupil goes no farther than the ninth grade, he may be able to develop the capacity for enjoying books in one or two fields. It is often possible, in the case of the boy who does not want to read because of past unhappy experiences, to surprise him by suggesting one of the almost universally popular books on the Jordan list or by appealing to an interest which he already has in dogs or in sports. Although a fortunate beginning will make him more receptive to future suggestions, the teacher cannot use an escalator plan to improve tastes until the child has become accustomed to the feeling of satisfaction from books. Then the suggestion of another type of book, perhaps rising out of some expressed interest, may come from the teacher or from another pupil, if several are in the conference room at one time.

A rather difficult task is the guidance of reading for girls who are steeped in sentimental fiction.

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working girls have from six to nine hours a day of spare time and that reading is one of the most permanent spare-time activities of girls. Her statement that a girl's reading tastes are fixed by the age of fifteen, although by no means true for every individual, stresses the need of substituting something of more value for the all-fiction adult magazine which is widely read. There is no particular harm in much of it; but it is likely to remain a permanent and exclusive taste, unless its position is gently usurped. Miss Parks' list of "in between book", including many light historical romances, such as When Knighthood was in Flower, is very useful.<sup>1</sup> Since in this case the immediate and vital need is the improvement of reading for entertainment, modern fiction of a simple type, such as Tarkington's Seventeen and Morley's Haunted Bookshop, will be frequently suggested as a substitute.

#### Reports on Reading

The time for conferences, in which a question or two may be asked about the book last read, is not much longer than that necessary for correcting a book report. Moreover, the stereotyped form of book report

1 Parks, C. B., Literary Escalators.

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develops a stereotyped attitude toward books, so that the summary habit becomes ingrained. The formal report is a rather unpleasant climax to a good book; whereas a critical review, which often increases the satisfaction of an older person, detracts from the pupil's enjoyment, if, indeed, it is not quite beyond his powers. About this time the child is getting the wide background on which to form his judgments and comparisons and is enlarging the field of his experience.

"There is, of course, fun in being critical, some of the best fun in the world, but it is fun that comes later on, I fancy, when that first youthful confidence in an author's infallibility has wistfully passed away. Although I was now fourteen or fifteen years of age books still seemed to grow like bright fruit on trees."<sup>1</sup>

Oral reviews are stimulating to older pupils, whose opinions are slightly more developed, and can be used in the ninth grade, informally, in group conferences and sometimes before the class when a student has read a different type of book from the usual or has an interesting point of view. The satisfaction and incentive which comes from telling about the book to the whole class is often over-weighted by the boredom from too many book reports. Too many books are apt to be overwhelming instead of suggestive. More book tests save

<sup>1</sup> Walpole, H., Reading, p. 21.



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### Incentives to Reading

Since most children, gifted as well as average, read books of both high and low quality, there will be little appeal in the less desirable books if reading with the qualities that children enjoy is plentifully supplied. It is seldom wise, however, to stress directly the undesirability of certain books. If there is not time for personal interviews with all of the pupils, many will be guided by a word of encouragement, a written suggestion, and will take advantage of incidental references, displays, and bulletin board suggestions. The constant silent reminders and incidental references can hardly be over-emphasized. Especially when there is no school librarian, the English teacher can make use of displays, book jackets, posters, and book maps.<sup>1</sup> Since the comments of other pupils and of those outside the school appear more impartial to student readers, the bulletin board will exhibit clip-

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pings from newspapers and magazines, such as editorial mention of a book, favorite books of famous people, and allusions to well known books. The study of reading habits of adults shows them to be susceptible to appeals of temporary interest; therefore, a display of books according to present school issues and current news may be successful. For instance, a newspaper account of a prominent man's hunting in a foreign land will lead others to read books on hunting, travel, and foreign countries.<sup>1</sup> Hobbies are a touchstone to wide interests in books. As there is a high correlation between moving pictures and the type of book reported by young people<sup>2</sup>, the teacher may well recommend pictures like "Disraeli" and "Arrowsmith," as well as other books which have been put into the cinema. A discussion in class, after a permitted assignment on a good picture, will help to bring before the pupils the qualities to be looked for.

Lehman<sup>3</sup> is much perturbed about the decline in reading from about thirteen years, and Rasche<sup>4</sup> wonders

1 Gray, W. S., Reading Interests and Habits of Adults, pp. 49-50, quoting from Donovan, H. L., The Content of Ordinary Reading, Elementary School Journal, 25: 373-5.

2 Ibid., p. 83.

3 Lehman, H. C., Reading Books 'Just for Fun', Social Review, 34: 357-64.

4 Rasche, W. F., Methods Employed to Stimulate Interests in Reading, School Review, 37: 124-131.



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how to combat competing interests. It is natural and not wholly regrettable that much of the omnivorous reading of youth decreases; the necessity is for guidance in the development of a broadened attitude toward books as a more vital part of life, closely linked with its experiences. When long tales of adventure no longer enthrall, -- although for some fortunates they never fail, -- other magic realms must be brought into view. Nor is it needful to combat other interests, for one interest fosters another, and reading can both develop a new interest and increase satisfaction in the old.

I suppose that the danger of emphasizing the desirability of improved taste to the extent of making literary snobs should not be ignored, although most pupils are impervious to over-zealous efforts. Books read from a sense of duty and submission to another's taste may rarely give either pleasure or profit; yet many a book started half-heartedly is finished with gusto. Fear of literary hypocrisy should not preclude a word of praise and expression of interest in reading which shows growing appreciation. A teacher's enthusiasm can do much in shaping tastes and in setting standards.

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preferences, a book list should be varied, although not bewilderingly long. It is important for the teacher, while not including all possible books on the list, to be able to suggest other books, whenever an individual would benefit by it. If records of the books read by each pupil are kept, it will be possible for the same book to be on the list for two or more grades, so that the pupil may read it when ready for it. This is especially advisable when the supply of books is limited. Terman's advice that the child be allowed to choose his own books, but with only the best presented for choice is the equivalent of no choice at all, when inferior tastes have already been formed. Books of moderate worth are frequently the best for an individual. The number of books need not be specified, since reading is a very personal adventure. Extension of reading to include some non-fiction can be made by relating the book to the individual's interest in science, nature, or famous men. Students should be persuaded to keep their own list of "books read and to be read." Moreover personal ownership should be encouraged, and an interesting exhibition can be made of each pupil's favorite book.

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### Reading Supplementing Literature Course

Supplementary reading is likewise valuable for enrichment of courses by books which give a fuller background than a text-book, such as stories of knight-hood in connection with Ivanhoe and historical novels in connection with English or American history. The more associations which can be built up about a book or a period in history, the more real it will seem and the better will it be remembered. If there are not many copies of the same book, pupils can read widely in the subject and combine their results in a class discussion period. Reading in science and historical novels can often vitalize other subjects for some pupils or make permanent an already existing enthusiasm. The English teacher has much opportunity to correlate various subjects and to provide wider associations which will be of great value.

### Magazine and Newspaper Reading

Studies of magazines popular with boys and girls show a need for acquaintance with the better types.<sup>1</sup>

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If the habit of reading magazines intelligently is to be formed, the ninth grade is not too early to begin. By referring students to different kinds of magazines for materials for symposiums and supplementary studies, the teacher can influence tastes by making the pupils familiar with the characteristics of the various types. If the students, after reading various types of magazines, draw up standards and conclusions by themselves, they will find greater meaning in them. Moreover they will have progressed in developing attitudes toward magazine reading which may probably be transferred helpfully to further magazine reading outside of school. Unless this is done, many students will never realize that magazines such as "Time" and "Harpers" have articles of interest to them, which are not beyond their comprehension. That the need for this is real is shown by Henderson's study<sup>1</sup> of the training high school pupils receive in the selection of current literature. Twenty-six per cent of the students had not been asked by teachers to read magazines. The training in literary appreciation in the class room evidently does not carry over into voluntary reading, unless a definite effort is made in that direction. Newspaper reading, especially the "funny paper", is one of the activities to

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### The Supply of Books

The problem of getting books and magazines is much more acute in the small school, where the town library is small and open only once or twice a week. When the school books are shabby, it is even more difficult to make them appeal to the lukewarm reader. But it is surprising what a small club can do to make books attractive. Rebinding in attractive cloth or

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## VI

Conclusion

At most the teacher can supply the pupils with the ability to read and with a taste for reading. To bring into the field of an individual's attention at the psychological moment the book which will then yield him the most increase of capacity is an important part of the teacher's work. A right sequence of books is a powerful agency in developing appreciation. If, in addition to this, the teacher furthers the reading process by every other efficient means, stimulating it by revealing its rich possibilities, the student's progress should be assured. In the last analysis the teacher of appreciation should aim at making herself unnecessary. The objective manifestation of success probably lies in the amount and character of the reading which the students continue to do of their own free will. Every effort will be made to help the student actualize as he reads, with aids of music and pictures, but with chief emphasis on training the student's own powers of imagery. The importance of sharing the emotional experience of the writer is recognized, and suggestions are given for the study of motives. Especially valuable as a source of appreciation is the study of ideas and

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Appreciation is the result of training and experience that can link literature with the life of the reader. The book and the method by which appreciation is achieved depend on the reader, since it is by nature such an individual response. Yet a study of the points of contact between the author's and the reader's experience reveals that there are intellectual, sensory, emotional, aesthetic and ethical elements. Since perhaps the most valuable result of teaching literature is a lasting appreciation of reading, the teacher should try to develop appreciation. The first essentials are a careful choice of books to fit the student and the relation of the books, with their backgrounds, to the reader's experience. Attention will be given to understanding of meaning, words, and allusions, although not to the extent of destroying the pleasure in reading. Every effort will be made to help the student sensualize as he reads, with aids of music and pictures, but with chief emphasis on training the student's own powers of imagery. The importance of sharing the emotional experience of the writer is recognized, and suggestions are given for the study of motives. Especially valuable as a source of appreciation is the study of ideas and

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values through comparison and discussion of freely expressed opinions. Technical study is limited to its simpler aspects of rhythm and images. Two additional methods of securing appreciation are through dramatization, which necessitates imaginative study and interpretation of details, and through writing, which develops a sensitivity to expression. Finally the teacher can take advantage of outside reading to give individual suggestions, drawn from wide acquaintance with books, so that the pupils' reading will correspond and improve with their tastes, interests and abilities.

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values through comparison and discussion of freely expressed opinions. Technical study is limited to its simpler aspects of rhythm and images. Two additional methods of securing appreciation are through dramatization, which necessitates imaginative study and interpretation of details, and through writing, which develops a sensitivity to expression. Finally the teacher can take advantage of outside reading to give individual suggestions, drawn from wide acquaintance with books, so that the pupils' reading will correspond and improve with their tastes, interests and abilities.



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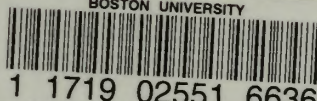
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